

Ann Arbor News to publish its last edition in July

March 23 2009, By JEFF KAROUB and ED WHITE , Associated Press Writers

(AP) -- The Ann Arbor News will cease publication in July after 174 years and will be replaced by a Web-focused community news operation built from the ground up.

Although AnnArbor.com plans print editions twice a week, officials stressed that the new Web site won't simply be the old [newspaper](#) delivered in a new format. News employees can apply for positions with the new company, but "job losses will be unavoidable," Publisher Laurel Champion said.

The end of the News was one of several major changes announced Monday at Michigan newspapers owned by the Newhouse family's Advance Publications. The [Flint Journal](#), The Bay City Times and The Saginaw News said they will cut their print editions to three days a week.

The developments came a week after Hearst Corp. ceased printing its Seattle Post-Intelligencer newspaper, turning it into an online-only operation.

They also precede by a week plans by the Detroit Free Press and The Detroit News to cut home delivery to three days a week. The Detroit newspapers will print small editions on other days and encourage people to get information online.

"The [Ann Arbor News](#) was struggling as a daily print newspaper, with

steep losses in 2008," Champion said. "At the same time the demand for local news and information in a wired community has never been stronger."

AnnArbor.com will publish a [print edition](#) on Thursdays and Sundays. The News currently uses mlive.com/ann-arbor as its Web site.

Matt Kraner, formerly chief marketing officer of The Plain Dealer in Cleveland, was named president and [chief executive officer](#) of AnnArbor.com, and Tony Dearing, former editor in Flint, was named chief content leader.

"It is the perfect place to embark on a Web-focused news and information strategy," Kraner said. "We will be working with Ann Arbor's residents and advertisers to build a unique and innovative community news and information service."

Advance owns eight daily newspapers in Michigan, commonly known as Booth Newspapers, the name of a former owner.

The company's Flint, Saginaw and Bay City newspapers will publish print editions only on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, starting June 1. They currently print seven days a week. The newspapers said their Web site, mlive.com, will continue to carry breaking news, photos, video and other content.

Editing and production work at the Jackson Citizen Patriot, The Grand Rapids Press, the Kalamazoo Gazette and The Muskegon Chronicle will be consolidated in Grand Rapids this summer.

The newspapers have gone through a recent wave of employee buyouts. In Grand Rapids, many of the most experienced reporters will be gone by summer.

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Citation: Ann Arbor News to publish its last edition in July (2009, March 23) retrieved 30 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-03-ann-arbor-news-publish-july.html>

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